## State of Idaho

## DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 12, 2008

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## WEAKENING U.S. ECONOMY TAKES ITS TOLL ON AMERICANS' HEALTH

New Research Reveals Consumers Are Reducing Medical Visits To Save Money

**BOISE ID** (August 12, 2008) — To save money, many Americans are cutting back on medical care — potentially putting their health at risk — according to new research from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC), of which Idaho is a member.

A national survey of 686 consumers, fielded in July, found that 22 percent of U.S. consumers say they have reduced the number of times they see the doctor as a result of today's economy. Furthermore, 11 percent of consumers say they have cut back the number of prescription drugs they take or the dosage of those medications to make the prescription last longer.

"Delaying medical treatment and regular physicals puts consumers at risk for potential health issues — and increases overall health insurance costs," said Bill Deal, Idaho Department of Insurance Director. "It's critical that consumers continue to take responsibility for their health so that we can all benefit from healthier lives and more affordable healthcare."

Insurance is an important — and oftentimes mandated — purchase for most Idaho residents. The Department is committed to helping residents be more knowledgeable insurance consumers.

"Insurance is one of the easiest ways that consumers can protect themselves against significant financial loss, especially during difficult economic times," said Director Deal. "It's also important that consumers understand their insurance needs and options."

The Idaho Department of Insurance can help with insurance-related inquiries or complaints. Call 334-4250 in Boise, toll-free 800-721-3272 statewide, or visit the Department's website, www.doi.idaho.gov.

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